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BOOK REVIEWS.

THE PRESENT CONFLICT OF IDEALS: A Study of the Philosophical Background of the War. By Ralph Barton Perry. New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1918. Pp. xiii+549.

As a "companion volume" to his *Present Philosophical Tendencies*, to quote his own description, Professor Perry has recently published this contribution to the literature of the war. His readers, it is true, are sure to wonder if the second book, thus said to be companionable with the first, would have taken its present form, had no war intervened. The war, however, did intervene and it has affected many companionships of things earlier and later. The war has disturbed the orderly going of men in other things besides the making of books. If, then, Professor Perry has wished to follow his work dealing with "technicalities and fundamentals" by a work dealing with "the moral, emotional, political and religious implications," his interested public is not going to complain; although two things have to be regretted. The companionship is not altogether successful. Yet, secondly, the war seems not to have been sufficiently advanced in 1918 to bring to his realism any real reconstruction. Nor is Professor Perry's public going to complain that out of two fields of interest, the conflict of philosophical isms and the conflict of national traits, he has made one continuous if not very successfully unified book. Lacking somewhat in logical integrity and perspective, his book is still readable throughout, affording as it does useful and often stimulating surveys of those two fields—chapters I-XXV and XXVI-XXXV. His learning is considerable; his reading wide; and, best of all, he frequently shows insight and he has a style that, while often too didactic for a book, is also often vigorous and realistic; the latter at times even "to a degree."

In certain general remarks about the war Professor Perry shows how times have changed since he wrote or rather since he delivered these Mills Foundation lectures. In the later days of let-down, reaction, discouragement, would he still express himself quite as follows? "The citizens of the British Empire and the fellow soldiers of the Allies are at this moment being so firmly cemented by the common cause which they are serving on the

soil of France that half the circumference of the earth can in the future no longer divide them" (p. 392). Again: "We went to war on a moral issue. I believe that is the case also with our allies, but with us, I think, there can be no question. We went to war deliberately; in a sense, and I thank God for it, we went *out of our way* to go to war." Nowadays such exaltation is experiencing many rebuffs. Yet the meaning here is not that these ideal views should not be cultivated, but that they are now more difficult, being in defiance of many things quite extra-Teutonic. Germany is no longer the only foe of better things and fine purposes.

Many readers, skipping the first series of chapters, may turn to the second because of its concern with topics of more popular interest. Doing so, whatever their loss, they will find much that is worth while. In his analysis of national characters, writing of German traits, of France, of Great Britain and of America, he has exhibited a good deal of discrimination and appreciation. Perhaps the treatment of the German is the best of these analyses, coming nearer to some originality than any of the others; but the clear reiteration of common truths, for example, about the "American tradition and ideal" will well repay reading. With our "buoyant and sanguine temper," our "belief in a fortunate destiny," our "spirit of equality," our "ideal of social democracy," we have no need of foreseeing even out of the present unrest "revolution or even grave disorder," although "far-reaching changes" must of course be expected (p. 530-539).

But the first and larger part of this two-in-one volume is given to the important philosophical isms of the present time. These and many of their interesting retinue and with them all many men, Kant, Spencer, Darwin, Nietzsche and Bergson among many more, are marshalled before the reader. Marshalled fairly well, too; yet, on the whole, presenting an array more diverting than convincing. To what does it come? At least for any one not a "new realist" the array and the arrangement seem somewhat perverted. The introduction, it is true, announces a definite order, the same in fact as that of the earlier *Present Philosophical Tendencies*, but at least one reader's impression is rather of a sequence, interesting in its details, than of a plan which as it is worked out really accomplishes something at the finish. Naturalism, idealism, pragmatism and realism are of course isms of the time and in this order they do make an inter-

esting series of chapters, or groups of chapters; but Professor Perry himself says that he has become "less and less confident" of their being coordinate and certainly they are not coordinate. So why treat naturalism and idealism, that is, scientificism or the cult of reason and idealism, the "champion of moral and religious faith," as the two great opponents, and then, turning to the others, on the whole as if they were coordinate, fail in any satisfactory and candid way to connect them with the great issue of the first two?

Pragmatism and realism are both, the latter surely no less than the former, the honest offspring of naturalism or scientificism. Pragmatism is so largely biologism. It shows the influence of evolution, regarding consciousness, knowledge, belief, as a vital function, a device in life's economy of adaptation, whose value is determined only by its service; while realism is another, a somewhat later and especially a skilfully philosophized or sublimated achievement of scientificism. Realism, which Perry boasts as "theoretical" rather than, like pragmatism, "practical," would replace biologism with a subtle but still discoverable psychologism, psychology simply being the latest of the sciences to captivate philosophy. Does not the new realist say that "consciousness is homogeneous and interactive with its environment" (p. 379), that "consciousness differs from bodies very much as one bodily system differs from another," being "capable both of affecting and being affected by them" (p. 377), and that "spirit is one of the many kinds of things that may be found by any observer in the same field of observable experience with mountains, rivers and stars?" (p. 377-8). Could scientificism or specifically psychologism have greater triumph than this? The rule of that homogeneity, it should be realized, is a poor rule if it does not work both ways. Realism indeed on these terms quite outdoes panpsychism! Idealism were almost as suitable a name for it as realism. Merely to have made the conscious self so real, so individual and at the same time so candidly organic to the natural environment is a notable thing, the acme of performance; but it does not justify just realism however "new."

So long as philosophy was captive or handmaid, not of psychology, but of theology (middle ages), mechanics (seventeenth and eighteenth centuries) or biology (nineteenth century), man was regarded as being and living with reference to something at one remove or another non-human and so was, as it were, between

the ideal and the real as two abstractions incongruous at once with each other and with him. Idealism, too, and realism were easily distinguished and were in real opposition, either being incapable of mingling unreservedly with the other. But in recent times psychology, at last bringing man to himself, bringing him and his experience together, has gone far to remove both the abstractness and the incongruity, revealing man and nature, the ideal and the real, as interactively one, as even homogeneous either with the other. Whence, while one's philosophy may or indeed must be realistic, it can not be an anti-idealistic realism without being still abstract, partisan *and untimely*. When Perry, patting his approved new realism on the back, says that it is "individualistic, democratic and humanitarian in its ethics," that it is "theistic and melioristic in its religion," and that it "distinguishes the good from the evil, and seeks to promote it not with a sense of assured triumph but rather with the confidence that springs from resolution," he shows himself at least willing to be a new idealist as well as, what he is so avowedly, a new realist.

But why should he prejudice the best meaning of the day's thinking and feeling by his partisan name? Or why should he be so blind to his new realism, if merely realism, being only the latest thing in scientificism. The agnile ideal may not thus lie down *within* the leonine real! Far better, if values must be taken as facts (p. 376) or if consciousness be indeed only "one kind of thing among many" (p. 376), to talk of a natural and immediate dualism. An immediate and empirical dualism would offer none of the difficulties of a metaphysical dualism and would also escape the one-sidedness of either of the abstractions. Even at cost of his realism, then, can not Professor Perry agree, is it not his own actual purpose only carried to its finish, that in these times thinking and feeling and willing must avoid, not some, but all abstractions?

"Natural and immediate dualism" may suggest an intellectual impossibility, but it somehow does report the philosophical fact of the time, as no partisan philosophy can. Life today, since the war more obviously and assertively than ever, is a close, immediate conflict of the real and the ideal; either being immediate in life and experience; life itself being, as not before, a personal and natural affair. Either ideal or real is become only "one kind of thing among many," whether spirits or stars.

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